



NEWS RELEASE

City of Santa Barbara
Police Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
10/24/2011

DRIVER ARRESTED AFTER TRAFFIC STOP

Driver charged with DUI, Resisting Arrest, and Unlicensed Driver

SANTA BARBARA, CA – 10/24/2011 – On 10/21/2011, at proximately 9:40 p.m., a Santa Barbara Police Officer was standing outside of his patrol car in the area of Hendry's Beach. The officer noticed a black Chevrolet pickup truck leaving the parking lot. While on Las Positas Road, the officer observed the black truck make three separate lane changes without turning on its turn signal in violation of the Vehicle Code. The officer initiated a traffic stop by turning on his vehicle's emergency lights. At this point, the black truck was entering Loreto Plaza. The truck did not yield right away. Instead, it continued slowly in the parking lot and eventually parked into one of the parking spaces.

The driver, later identified as Santa Barbara resident Tony Vincent Denunzio, 50 years of age, exited his truck. The officer ordered Denunzio to get back into his vehicle. Denunzio ignored the command and began to walk away, turning his back on the officer. The officer took hold of Denunzio's arm in order to prevent him from walking away. Denunzio attempted to pull free from the officer's hold. The officer told Denunzio to get on the ground in order to handcuff him and place him under arrest. The officer attempted to get Denunzio's arm behind his back but was not able to do so because of Denunzio's level of resistance. The officer requested emergency back-up. The officer then tripped Denunzio causing Denunzio to fall on his hands and knees. The officer told Denunzio several times to stop resisting, but Denunzio continued to resist. The officer then delivered several palm strikes to the back of Denunzio's head. The officer hoped this would distract Denunzio enough so he could place Denunzio's arm behind his back. The palm strikes were

ineffective, and Denunzio continued to struggle and physically resist the officer. The officer then delivered a knee strike to the area of Denunzio's ribs. The officer followed up with several hand strikes to Denunzio's rib area. During the struggle, the officer deployed his Taser several times in an attempt to get Denunzio to place his hands behind his back. Denunzio continued to resist, and the Taser had almost no effect on him. Additional officers arrived to assist and noticed that the Taser was ineffective. They observed that Denunzio was resisting by not placing his hands behind his back and tucking them underneath by his waist. The officer believed that Denunzio could possibly be retrieving a weapon. Even with additional officers, Denunzio continued to resist for over a minute before being subdued by the officers. During the struggle, an officer delivered a knee strike to Denunzio's face, which allowed the officers to handcuff him. The officer who initiated the traffic stop on Denunzio could smell an odor of an intoxicant on Denunzio's person during the incident. Denunzio was then taken into custody for DUI, Resisting Arrest, and Unlicensed Driver. Denunzio refused to provide a chemical sample to obtain his blood alcohol level. Officers, assisted by a nurse, had to obtain an involuntary blood sample at the Santa Barbara County Jail. Denunzio was transported to Goleta Hospital where he was treated and released for his injuries. His injuries consisted of a broken nose and complaint of pain to his ribs.

Denunzio is currently on probation for DUI with probation terms stating that he shall not commit any criminal offense, refuse a BAC test, or drive a vehicle with alcohol in his blood. He has also been convicted in the past of Reckless Driving. Denunzio was driving without a valid license, which was suspended as a result of his previous DUI conviction.

Denunzio's resistance was captured on camera. The patrol vehicle was equipped with a camera system that the police department is currently testing. The Chief of Police is going to review the video in order to determine whether further investigation is warranted. Several witnesses were interviewed at the scene. The police department encourages any members of the public that witnessed the incident to contact the police department at (805) 897-2347.